



**HALTON  
POLICE  
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February 12, 2024

The Honourable Doug Downey  
Attorney General  
McMurtry-Scott Building, 11th Floor  
720 Bay St  
Toronto ON M7A 2S9

Dear Honourable Doug Downey,

As Chair of the Halton Police Service Board, I am compelled to address a critical concern on behalf of the Board regarding the Milton Courthouse at 491 Steeles Ave E., Milton, Ontario. This letter marks our formal appeal to your office concerning the longstanding and well-documented issues plaguing this facility, which have significantly impacted the administration of justice in one of Canada's fastest-growing regions as well as the health and safety of the employees of our Board, your staff and judges as well as legal professionals, accused, civil parties, witnesses, victims and the general public.

The Milton Courthouse's deficiencies have been an open secret, underscored by repeated closures due to mold, asbestos, and structural concerns. These issues have not only posed health and safety risks but have also led to significant delays in the judicial process, affecting the rights of those awaiting trial. The temporary solutions applied thus far have been akin to band-aid fixes, failing to address the root causes of the courthouse's inadequacies.

The situation has been further aggravated by the courthouse's inability to safely and efficiently manage the custody and transport of accused persons—a concern notably highlighted by Chief Stephen Tanner of the Halton Regional Police. The courthouse's outdated infrastructure compromises not only the safety of the public and law enforcement personnel but also the dignity and security of those in custody. Instances where officers have had to navigate public areas or stairwells due to elevator failures are particularly alarming and underscore the urgent need for a modern facility that can meet current and future demands.

Moreover, the history of the issue reveals a pattern of neglect and temporary measures that have left the legal community in Halton Region without a viable long-term solution. The announcement of a new courthouse project on June 21, 2017, had provided a glimmer of hope, only for it to be dashed by the subsequent cancellation of the project on May 21, 2020, by your administration. This decision has left us with a facility that is not only insufficient but increasingly untenable.

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Given these pressing issues, we urge your office to reconsider and reinstate the previously announced courthouse project in Oakville. The land designated for this project remains owned by the province and available for development. This is not merely a request for infrastructure investment but a plea for a commitment to the principles of justice, safety, and accessibility for the people of Halton Region.

Reinstating this project would directly address the critical issues faced by the Milton Courthouse, offering a facility capable of meeting the growing needs of our community. It would also represent a tangible step toward enhancing the judicial infrastructure in Ontario, ensuring that it is equipped to provide a safe, secure, and dignified environment for all participants in the judicial process.

We understand the complexities and financial considerations involved in such significant infrastructure projects. However, the current situation at the Milton Courthouse necessitates immediate and decisive action. We understand from Chief Tanner, through his ongoing discussions with you, that infrastructure Ontario is or has been doing a review of this facility. Surely that review will guide the province towards a new facility rather than further investing significantly and wasting tax dollars by investing in this long outdated one. We are fully prepared to collaborate and support the Ministry in any capacity to facilitate the expedited realization of this essential project.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue. We are eager to engage in a dialogue on how we can move forward constructively and swiftly to address this critical need. The safety, security, and judicial efficiency of our community are of paramount importance, and we look forward to your positive response and the reinstatement of the new courthouse project.

Sincerely,

Councillor Jeff Knoll

Chair, Halton Police Service Board

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